REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 22-05-2011	2. REPORT TYPE FINAL	3. DATES COVERED (From - To)

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE

Hybrid War: The Gap in the Range of Military Operations

5a. CONTRACT NUMBER

5b. GRANT NUMBER

5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER

6. AUTHOR(S)

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Paper Advisor (if Any): Dr. Douglas Hime

5d. PROJECT NUMBER

5e. TASK NUMBER

5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

Joint Military Operations Department
Naval War College
686 Cushing Road
Newport, RI 02841-1207

8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)

11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
For Example: Distribution Statement A: Approved for public release; Distribution is unlimited.

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES A paper submitted to the Naval War College faculty in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Joint Military Operations Department. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the NWC or the Department of the Navy.

14. ABSTRACT

While the Israeli operation in Gaza against Hamas in 2008 was effective in some ways, the U.S. military should not look to the operation as a model for defeating groups postured for hybrid war. Although the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) proved they could effectively move through Gaza and take ground against Hamas, a force fighting a hybrid foe would still face some unresolved operational challenges. Whether against Hamas, or the more sophisticated Hezbollah, the fighting took place within civilian areas and often with, or seemingly with, civilians integrated in the fighting. Any force using the IDF's operational template would have to understand that it provides no way to separate combatants from the population. Additionally, the IDF did not achieve most of its objectives in either operation. Both Hamas and Hezbollah retained legitimacy and maintained a significant military capability. Importantly, Israel had no plan to conduct a "hold" or "build" phase in their operations. Without those phases, it is difficult to see what a U.S. commander could accomplish using a template that is essentially an operational raid. Finally, both Hamas and Hezbollah dominated information management by defining victory simply as not losing and effectively manipulating the media environment. Although the IDF experience provides some insights into information operations (IO), there are still significant challenges in countering adversaries who can so easily control the message.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
Hybrid war, Hezbollah, Hamas, Israeli Defense Forces (IDF)

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Chairman, JMO Dept
a. REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	**b. ABSTRACT** UNCLASSIFIED	**c. THIS PAGE** UNCLASSIFIED		21	**19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER** (include area code) 401-841-3556

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, R.I.

Hybrid War: The Gap in the Range of Military Operations

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

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Signature: _____

22 May 2011

Contents

Abstract

While the Israeli operation in Gaza against Hamas in 2008 was effective in some ways, the U.S. military should not look to the operation as a model for defeating groups postured for hybrid war. Although the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) proved they could effectively move through Gaza and take ground against Hamas, a force fighting a hybrid foe would still face some unresolved operational challenges. Whether against Hamas, or the more sophisticated Hezbollah, the fighting took place within civilian areas and often with, or seemingly with, civilians integrated in the fighting. Any force using the IDF's operational template would have to understand that it provides no way to separate combatants from the population. Additionally, the IDF did not achieve its objectives in either operation. Both Hamas and Hezbollah retained legitimacy and maintained a significant military capability. Importantly, Israel had no plan to conduct a "hold" or "build" phase in their operations. Without those phases, it is difficult to see what a U.S. commander could accomplish using a template that is essentially an operational raid. Finally, both Hamas and Hezbollah dominated information management by defining victory simply as not losing and effectively manipulating the media environment. Although the IDF experience provides some insights into information operations (IO), there are still significant challenges in countering adversaries who can so easily control the message.

Military action is never directed against material force alone; it is always aimed simultaneously at the moral forces which give it life, and the two cannot be separated.

—Carl Von Clausewitz
On War

Introduction

On 14 July 2006, Hezbollah provided a telling illustration of the potential of hybrid war when members of the group fired Chinese-made, C-802 anti-ship missiles from a coastal town in southern Lebanon. That a non-state actor possessed this modern weapon system was significant. More importantly, the group was able to damage an Israeli warship in the Mediterranean with the missiles while Hasan Nasrallah, the leader of the armed group, explained the action live on globally broadcast television.[1] This event further defined hybrid war. Groups postured for hybrid war exist in the middle of the conflict spectrum between the loosely organized insurgent and the traditional state military.[2] These organizations blend with their ideologically committed population and use a potent mix of modern weaponry, high quality conventional battlefield preparation, and small-unit guerilla tactics including terrorism.[3] The month-long Israeli assault on Hezbollah in southern Lebanon in 2006 is a textbook example of hybrid war, and disturbingly, one that the IDF fought poorly.[4] Scholars such as Milan Vego and H. R. McMaster have pointed to failures in Israeli military doctrine and an overreliance on air targeting as the root causes of IDF failure against Hezbollah.[5] In general, observers note that the IDF used airpower to attack infrastructure as if it were

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[1] Scott C. Farquhar, *Back to Basics,* 65.
[2] David E. Johnson, *Military Capabilities for Hybrid War*, 5.
[3] John J. McCuen, "Hybrid Wars," 108.
[4] Farquhar, 5.
[5] H. R. McMaster, "On War: Lessons to Be Learned," 22; Milan N. Vego, "Systems Versus Classical Approach to Warfare," 40.

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fighting a state, and that its ground force relied too much on its recent experience conducting a decades-long counterinsurgency in southern Lebanon.

By 2008, after thoroughly reviewing its operational doctrine and training, the IDF performed more effectively in a similar conflict against Hamas, another group postured for hybrid war. During its brief incursion into the Gaza Strip, the IDF used tough, and in many ways traditional, urban combined arms techniques integrated with good intelligence.[6] The U.S. Army's Combined Arms Center studied the two operations and focused on the Israelis' return to proven operational techniques, pointedly titling the work "Back to Basics."[7] With many observers suggesting that hybrid wars are likely to occur with increasing frequency in the future, states concerned with maintaining their ability to enforce international order might look to the success of the recent IDF operation in Gaza as a model for fighting hybrid war. However, while the Israeli operation in Gaza against Hamas in 2008 was effective in some ways, the U.S. military should not look to the operation as a model for defeating groups postured for hybrid war.

This paper examines the unresolved operational challenges that remain after looking at the IDF's performance against Hezbollah and Hamas. First, it examines the structure of hybrid war and the IDF's operational template. Next, it looks at the problem of the population connected to the two groups. Whether against Hamas or Hezbollah, the fighting took place within civilian areas and often with civilians integrated in the fighting in ways significantly different than in other types of warfare. Then, the paper examines the IDF's operational objectives. Both Hamas and Hezbollah retained legitimacy and maintained a significant military capability. While effective by some measures, the IDF's operating

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[6] Johnson, 6-7.
[7] Farquhar, 34.

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concept does not provide a good match with the objectives it achieved.   Finally, the paper

looks at information management. Both Hamas and Hezbollah defined victory simply as not

losing and effectively manipulated the media environment.[8] Although the IDF experience

provides some insights into information operations (IO), there are still significant challenges

in countering adversaries who can so easily control their message. In closing, the paper

provides some insights into the problem of hybrid war for U.S. military commanders.

Hybrid Posture

Hezbollah and Hamas are examples of groups postured for hybrid war. In both cases

Israel faced an adversary with well-planned urban defenses including tunnels, reinforced

concrete bunkers, roadside bombs, booby traps, and elaborately placed weapons caches.

Additionally, both had sophisticated weapons including surface-to-air and anti-tank missiles

while Hezbollah had anti-ship missiles and even a limited Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV)

capability. Although Hezbollah fighters were better trained and more effective in combat,

both armed groups operated in small, decentralized cells.[9] Overall, the groups had a

sophisticated defensive plan.

Hezbollah and Hamas also relied on support from donor states. By some estimates,

Iran sends $100 million to Hezbollah each year.[10] Additionally, Hezbollah flies militants

from Syria to Iran for training while also receiving arms shipments from both countries.[11]

Hamas receives less illicit aid because its borders are more closely guarded. However,

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[8] Farquhar, 58.
[9] Ibid., 51-53.
[10] Thanassis Cambanis, *A Privilege to Die*, 15.
[11] Cambanis, 221-222.

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through the use of tunnels under the Egyptian border, Hamas still smuggles weapons, construction supplies, and other military equipment from Syria, Iran, and Hezbollah.[12]

While primarily defensive, Hezbollah and Hamas could project power in limited ways. The two organizations maintained suicide bombers, small kidnapping teams, and unguided Katyusha rockets along with some mortars and artillery. Also, Hezbollah and Hamas used effective information operations to get their messages not only to their own people, but the Middle East region and the world. Although Hezbollah had better training and discipline among its fighters, the two organizations represent potent examples of groups postured for hybrid war.[13]

Israeli Defense Forces Operations

The Israeli military learned significant lessons during operations against Hezbollah in 2006 and had developed an improved operational template by the time the IDF attacked into Gaza in 2008. In the years between the two conflicts, Hamas had taken power in the Gaza Strip and had hardened the Palestinian stance against Israel. The group gradually increased its weapon smuggling and readiness for a military conflict. By the end of 2008, with as many as 100 rockets a month landing indiscriminately in Israel, the IDF attacked into Gaza.[14] In the month-long conflict the IDF demonstrated a new operational model for hybrid war.

Many argue that the IDF performed exceptionally well. According to William Fleser, "IDF operations against Hamas were characterized by precision air strikes, a skillful combination of ground maneuver and special operations—synchronized with the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Palestinian population—and homeland defense measures, all

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[12] Cordesman, 7-8.
[13] Johnson, 5-6.
[14] Cordesman, 7-9.

reinforced by an active information campaign."[15] Importantly, brigade commanders had

control of air and indirect fires as well as surveillance assets including UAVs. Functioning

like a small task force, each brigade could quickly coordinate the efforts of subordinate

elements in order to be more responsive while reducing casualties on both sides. Finally, the

IDF focused on traditionally trained heavy units that included tanks and mechanized infantry,

rather than on light forces, organized to fight insurgents. [16] Overall, the IDF was more

effective at taking territory from a hybrid-postured enemy by 2008.

      During the conflict, the IDF also developed a comprehensive plan to control

information. For example, the Israeli military restricted journalist access to the conflict zone

and banned all cell phone use by its troops. Additionally, the IDF embraced social media

sites, like YouTube, as the primary vehicles to post timely updates as the operation

progressed. In this way, the IDF controlled its message, documented Israeli successes, and

provided proof of Hamas' use of civilians to shelter military activities and civilian

infrastructure to store weapons and stage attacks.[17] The IDF experience provides insights

into timely release of information at the lowest levels, balancing operational security with the

publics' need for information, and a robust professional and amateur combat camera

capability, among others.[18] Overall, the IDF conducted credible information operations.

      As a recent conflict against a hybrid-postured adversary, one could argue that the U.S.

military should look to the IDF experience as an operational template for fighting hybrid war.

Much of what the IDF learned during the two brief conflicts about combining traditional

urban operations with air support and good intelligence could be viewed as applicable for the

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[15] William Fleser, "Preparing for Hybrid Threats," 11.
[16] Johnson, 7-8.
[17] Thomas Rid and Marc Hecker, *War 2.0,* 123.
[18] Farquhar, 135-137.

U.S. military. However, the IDF's model has serious shortcomings that make it dangerous as an operational roadmap for hybrid war.

People

Critically, the two, month-long assaults unavoidably killed and injured civilians and caused severe destruction to civilian infrastructure. The IDF began its 2006 operation in southern Lebanon after a Hezbollah raiding team killed several civilians and kidnapped two soldiers. By the war's end, well over 1,000 Lebanese had been killed and over 4,000 wounded. Furthermore, nearly 8,000 houses were destroyed with 100,000 more sustaining damage.[19] In towns along the border, or where there had been heavy fighting, 50-90 percent of the structures, including schools, mosques, and clinics, were destroyed.[20] In fact, Hezbollah's use of mosques and day-care centers as fighting positions and sites for weapons caches was intentional. The use of civilian buildings was central to its strategy of making the Israeli operation look disproportional by inducing civilian casualties and damage.[21]

Although using a significantly better operational plan for its assault into Gaza, IDF operations killed non-combatants and destroyed civilian infrastructure. Against Hamas, the IDF estimated that 1,300 Palestinians had been killed with possibly half being fighters.[22] Additionally, the assault destroyed 4,000 houses with another 17,000 damaged.[23] The IDF made efforts to minimize civilian deaths through pre-attack notifications and precise targeting, but also used highly destructive techniques like avoiding mined and booby trapped roads by driving armored bulldozers through houses in order create movement corridors.[24]

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[19] Cambanis, 117-118.
[20] Ibid., 91.
[21] Sarah E. Kreps, "The 2006 Lebanon War," 79.
[22] Cordesman, 59.
[23] Farquhar, 67.
[24] Ibid., 33, 93.

As with Hezbollah, Hamas' military operations were integrated into all aspects of life in Gaza. Turning civilians and infrastructure into legitimate IDF targets was central to both groups' strategy.[25] The number of casualties and amount of damage to civilian structures was severe and disproportionate to the original insults that drove the fighting.

The civilian population is the fundamental problem for an opponent of a group with hybrid capabilities. It is a different problem than that faced in a counterinsurgency, where the people are also pivotal. Classically, an insurgent fights among the people but is relatively weak. The counterinsurgent is strong and can generally go anywhere in order to interact with the population, who is largely uncommitted and contested by both sides.[26] Engagements with insurgents are at relatively low cost to civilians and infrastructure when compared to high intensity combat. At the conventional end of the spectrum, militaries fight militaries. Traditionally, civilians are either on the margins of the conflict or are killed and injured as a tragic but unavoidable consequence of pursuing military objectives.[27] In either case, the population is distinct, as a group, from combatants.

Notably, Clausewitz, defining the classic view of warfare, uses a triangular depiction to describe the people, the military, and the government as separate groups.[28] This three-sided view of war can help both counterinsurgents and conventional militaries think about how to divide and control the individual parts to defeat an enemy. However, in a hybrid war as fought by Hezbollah and Hamas, the distinctions among the three groups are impossible to make.

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[25] Peter Berkowitz, "The Goldstone Report and International Law," 16-22.
[26] U.S. Army, *Counterinsurgency,* 1-1.
[27] Johnson, 5.
[28] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, 89.

A hybrid-postured group like Hezbollah does not have to win over the population; the people are already ideologically committed to cause. At the time of the war, Hezbollah had between 300 and 3,000 core fighters with the best equipment and training. An additional 10,000 local fighters were thought to be available as reserves from among the 400,000 people living in southern Lebanon.[29] However, these numbers do not tell the whole story. Hezbollah acts like a state within a state. It handles trash collection, pipes in drinking water, manages the phone service, builds and supervises schools, clears traffic jams and provides guidance counseling. More importantly, the people in southern Lebanon are committed to Hezbollah's ideology, which focuses on dignity, faith, self-reliance, and most importantly, sustained resistance to Israel and the United States.[30] Much of the population consists of true-believers, including educated professionals like engineers, teachers, and nurses.[31] When the war broke out, tens of thousands of Lebanese volunteered to help resist the Israeli attack.[32] These civilians filled all manner of supporting roles—including helping at medical facilities, cooking food for fighters, resupplying ammunition, and providing runners for communication—and many stayed in the conflict zone simply as an act of resistance. Significantly, as Hezbollah thinks about future conflicts with Israel, it plans to keep even more of the civilian population in place as support personnel.[33]

In summary, Hezbollah rejects any distinction between civil and military operations. Instead, it seamlessly integrates its political functions, news reporting, military activities, civil services, and education into a cohesive whole.[34] War against a group postured like

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[29] Farquhar, 52.
[30] Cambanis, 274.
[31] Ibid., 5.
[32] Ibid., 15.
[33] Ibid., 18.
[34] Ibid., 67.

Hezbollah is not among the people or separate from the people; it is against the people. To modify the Clausewitzian analogy, the effect is more of concentric circles than of a triangle. The governmental figures at the core expand outward to the party members who blend with varying degrees of fighters and the general population. Therefore, the problem faced in fighting hybrid war is how to achieve operational objectives when much of the operating environment will be filled with complicit civilians.

Thought about hybrid war often focuses on issues like advanced weapons systems, but the true anti-access dilemma is created when those systems are integrated into a supportive civilian population.[35] The IDF model provides an effective example of physically moving against a group postured for hybrid war, but to use it the United States would have to believe that its reasons for entering the conflict were worth the inevitable cost in civilian casualties and destroyed infrastructure. No U.S. commander should adopt the IDF template for hybrid war without understanding that it is effectively a combined arms campaign against a civilian population.

Objectives

Although the IDF performed better while fighting Hamas than it did fighting Hezbollah, its actions against both groups did not accomplish most of the original objectives. Against Hezbollah, the Israelis wanted to stop the rocket attacks coming from southern Lebanon, rescue two hostages, and deter future aggression. However, rocket attacks actually

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[35] This dilemma is further amplified by international legal views. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) specifically addresses civilians who voluntarily shield the activities of organized armed groups, acknowledging that these civilians expose themselves to the justifiable use of force. Notably, in the IRC's view, they do not lose their protected status. In fact, after both conflicts, Israel faced charges of war crimes by organizations like Human Rights Watch. Although Hezbollah and Hamas actively integrated civilians into their defensive scheme, states seeking to contest groups like these face restricted options based on international norms.
See "Interpretive Guidance on the Notion of Direct Participation in Hostilities under International Humanitarian Law," 1025, and Human Rights Watch, "Reports: Israel and the Occupied Territories."

increased throughout the operation, and the IDF did not find its hostages.[36] Similarly, the

IDF did not accomplish everything if wanted against Hamas. The IDF limited its offensive

to weakening Hamas militarily and reducing its ability to conduct rocket attacks. Hamas,

however, remained in power and was still able to launch indirect fire attacks into Israel

throughout the operation.[37] Some observers even question whether the IDF's

accomplishments against Hamas were beneficial at all when compared to the longer-term

negative political and strategic consequences.[38]

Notably absent from the IDF plan was any attempt at staying in the occupied areas in

order to make permanent changes to the situation. In fact, Israeli leaders considered and

rejected broadening the operation against Hamas to include a significant occupation and

rebuilding phase.[39] Some observers suggest that a robust rebuilding and societal

restructuring— "counter-organization" —phase is central to a long-term decisive victory in

hybrid war.[40] However, given the strength of commitment demonstrated by the people in

Gaza and southern Lebanon, this proposition seems problematic. Neither group of people

was likely to be won over by reconstruction projects. In both cases the IDF caused

significant casualties among the population and widespread destruction of civilian

infrastructure. It is improbable that an ideologically committed population, suffering under

this type of operation, would support reconstruction and reorganization by the occupying

power.

The only significant objective that the IDF believes it accomplished in both

operations was deterrence of future aggression. For example, in an important admission

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[36] Dan Fayutkin, "The Second Lebanon War," 213-215.
[37] Farquhar, 28, 34.
[38] Cordesman, ii.
[39] Ibid., 11.
[40] McCuen, 111.

during an interview after the war, Hezbollah's leader said that had he known that Israel would respond so aggressively he would not have ordered the kidnapping of the two Israeli soldiers.[41] Many Israeli observers also felt that the improved operational methods used against Hamas had restored the deterrent effect of the IDF.[42] In fact, indirect fire attacks from Gaza into Israel fell precipitously after the 2008 operation. According to IDF statistics, the 2009 and 2010 totals were among the lowest in a decade.[43] The IDF's deterrence strategy in both conflicts can be translated from Hebrew as "The Boss Has Gone Crazy."[44] This was the Israeli concept that an aggressive, disproportionate response to cross-border fire and raiding by Hezbollah and Hamas would deter future attacks by the groups. This strategy may have worked.

Deterrence could be significant, but if it was the only useful outcome for Israel, the IDF might have used means other than a ground operation to achieve its disproportionate response strategy. The IDF could have used its air and naval superiority to conduct strikes throughout Gaza while cutting off aid to Hamas, for example. The IDF may have developed an effective operational template for taking ground, but options exist other than confronting these types of armed groups symmetrically on their home ground.

The U.S. military would need to examine its objectives if it were looking to the IDF as model for conducting hybrid war. A well executed, but costly, combined arms ground operation, with no plan for a permanent change in societal dynamics, is not the best method if deterrence is the only achievable goal.

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[41] Cambanis, 183.
[42] Cordesman, 68.
[43] The Israel Project, "Rocket Statistics."
[44] Cambanis, 269.

Information

Although the IDF developed a better information management model for its assault into Gaza, it does not provide a template for victory in the battle of impressions with key audiences. As a result of its experiences in southern Lebanon, the IDF made significant changes to its posture on information. As noted, the IDF banned cell phones and barred reporters from the battlefield. At the same time, it used public affairs officials to provide accurate and timely information to Arab, Israeli, and the broader publics about the goals of the operation and its progress. Overall, the IDF significantly improved its control of information while satisfying the publics' need for an explanation of events.[45]

While the IDF controlled the information surrounding its military operation, for groups like Hezbollah and Hamas, military operations are secondary to information. Hezbollah's primary objective during the Second Lebanon War was to increase its legitimacy and attract followers to its cause by demonstrating the ability to resist the IDF assault.[46] Hezbollah put reporters from Al-Manar, its own 24-hour satellite TV station, on nearly all operations.[47] The group also ran its own radio and internet sites where it could highlight successful attacks on the IDF, as well as dramatize civilian casualties, while using sophisticated photo and video editing to present a biased view of the war.[48] A Hezbollah-like adversary can set a low bar for military success because its primary goal is simply to demonstrate resistance publicly. As such, the hybrid adversary wins an information victory every time it can show proof of resistance.

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[45] Rid, 123.
[46] Shmuel Bar and Dick Crowell, ed., "Hybrid Conflict," 4.
[47] Cambanis, 79.
[48] Farquhar, 66-67.

Additionally, groups like Hamas and Hezbollah can manipulate the media to a greater extent than a state actor. While states must adhere to international norms for collecting, analyzing, and discerning the truth of events, non-state groups are free from accountability. As such, a hybrid adversary can be faster with information.[49] For example, Hezbollah ensured that its supporters understood the importance of the message that only civilians were in southern Lebanon. When people were killed in the fighting, those interacting with the media knew to say that the dead and injured had been civilians. This information campaign made all casualties appear to be civilian causalities in media reports regardless of the truth of individual actions on the ground.[50] Furthermore, Hezbollah specifically put weapon systems and caches near homes or schools with the hope that they would be targeted and thus garner an information advantage.[51] Similarly, Hamas transformed civilians and infrastructure into legitimate targets for the IDF in order to capture the information victory when those individuals or sites were targeted.[52] In some cases, members of Hamas even staged casualties for camera crews in order to get maximum value from an event.[53]

Finally, destroyed infrastructure and dead civilians, whether real or exaggerated, are a severe information challenge. In both cases, while trying to limit damage, the IDF caused thousands of casualties and significant destruction in civilian areas. The IDF could sometimes point to clear evidence of a civilian site being used specifically to shield military activities. However, Hamas had limitless access to the reality of post-strike images of a destroyed mosque or school. Among people supportive of Hamas and Hezbollah, the images

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[49] Rid, 131.
[50] Cambanis, 46.
[51] Kreps, 79.
[52] Berkowitz, 22.
[53] Farquhar, 109.

of destruction played to the message of resistance.[54] Additionally, in both cases, the IDF

caused hundreds of times more casualties than the specific events that sparked the conflict.

Regardless of how the message is crafted, this truth makes for a decidedly uphill information

battle when following the IDF template.

For the U.S. military, an aggressive assault through a civilian population using the

IDF model would be a significant informational challenge. It could expect to have all

casualties described as "civilian," with faked, exaggerated, and staged video and photo

"evidence" fed to the world media in real-time. Additionally, the information battle would

be central to the hybrid adversaries' plan, while the United States would be focused on

military victories. The IDF's operational template does not adequately address these

information management issues. In no case would a U.S. military commander be able to

explain adequately the proportionality of causing thousands more civilian deaths than the

event that sparked the original incident.

Recommendations

Although a hybrid war poses some dangerous challenges, an operational commander

need not be committed to entering one symmetrically like the IDF did against both Hezbollah

and Hamas. First, it is important to understand that hybrid groups are truly dangerous only

on the defensive. Importantly, neither Hezbollah nor Hamas possesses a serious offensive

capability. Firing volleys of un-aimed indirect fire into Israel rarely causes casualties or

significant damage.[55] Notably, Hezbollah did not launch an attack when Israel went into

Gaza in 2008. Most analysts suggest that this was a strategic decision based on Hezbollah's

estimate that Hamas would not do well and that supporting them would tarnish the reputation

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[54] Farquhar, 114.
[55] BBC News, "Q&A: The Gaza conflict." Between 2001 and 2009, members of Hamas fired more than 8,600 rockets into Israel, killing 28 people during that time.

gained following their own success in 2006.[56]   Significantly, though, the group had few

options.

The strength of both Hezbollah and Hamas is centered on their integration with an

ideologically committed population. A Hezbollah-like organization that is not surrounded by

civilians can be targeted and destroyed.[57]   For Hezbollah, trained to operate in small teams

from prepared defenses on home ground, moving into northern Israel in a large-scale ground

attack would have been disastrous. Therefore, its offensive options are primarily limited to

rocket attacks and hostage-taking tactics. Hybrid enemies are dangerous, but this is primarily

because they conduct effective anti-access campaigns.

A group postured for hybrid war that developed a sophisticated power projection

capability might doom itself to a true high intensity conflict. If Hezbollah committed a 9/11

style attack by using a guided missile or deploying a terrorist cell that resulted in the deaths

of thousands of Israeli or American citizens, its actions would likely invite a response that

was less concerned about civilian casualties and damage to infrastructure, and more

concerned with retribution. The question for a state countering a hybrid-postured group is

not if it can win the major combat operations phase of a ground campaign, it is whether the

objective is worth the inevitable civilian deaths, destruction of infrastructure, and attention

from the world media. As such, not only do groups like Hezbollah and Hamas have limited

ability to project power, they have an interest in not projecting too much power in order to

avoid an adversary's conventional military strengths.

While defensively strong, the United States may be able to weaken a group preparing

for hybrid war by attacking its sources of arms and money. Hezbollah's operational scheme

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[56] Cambanis, 269-270.
[57] Stephen Biddle and Jeffery A. Friedman, *2006 Lebanon Campaign and the Future of Warfare,* 81.

was so decentralized that the U.S. Army's Combined Arms Center suggested in its study of the conflict that there was no strategic center of gravity for the organization.[58] However, Hezbollah needed the support of the people of southern Lebanon, and the group kept that support by delivering on promises central to its strategy. First, Hezbollah was able to actively resist the IDF during the war through its acquisition of modern weaponry from Iran and Syria. Second, the group was able to conduct massive reconstruction projects afterwards, even promising to make things better than they had been before the conflict. Reportedly, Hezbollah paid each owner of a destroyed house $12,000 using Iranian funding.[59] Hezbollah would be considerably more vulnerable if it could be cut off from outside support.

While groups like Hezbollah have some significant differences from insurgent groups, a central finding of a RAND study of 89 insurgencies found that "withdrawal of state sponsorship cripples an insurgency and typically leads to its defeat."[60] Other observers, who have studied Hezbollah extensively, agree that, without Iran, Hezbollah would be a far less potent organization.[61] Therefore, targeting the finances, training relationships, and weapon shipments sent to a hybrid-postured organization could prove more useful than a ground campaign targeted at the group itself.

In summary, the United States is not likely to face an existential threat from a group postured for hybrid war. While such a group may cause serious operational challenges, the United States would be better served by weakening the organization through attacking

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[58] Farquhar, 10.
[59] Cambanis, 170.
[60] Ben Conable and Martin C. Libicki, *How Insurgencies End*, xiii.
[61] Cambanis, 220.

outside sources of support. Attacking a hybrid group through a complex combined arms operation is not the best method to produce useful results.

Conclusion

While leading Joint Forces Command in 2009, General James Mattis pointed to hybrid war as a growing trend in future conflict.[62] Increasingly, operational commanders will need to think through the problems associated with countering groups posing this type of threat. For example, in 2010 Mexican authorities arrested a Hezbollah cell in Tijuana. [63] While it is unclear what all of its interests are, the implications are sobering. Although Hezbollah has typically focused on regional issues, it has been involved in numerous attacks on Americans, most significantly the Beirut bombing of the Marine barracks in 1983. If Hezbollah were linked to a Mumbai-style attack somewhere along the United States' southern border, it is very likely that the U.S. would take action. While the IDF lessons from its two recent hybrid wars seem to point to an effective and direct model for attacking Hezbollah in Lebanon in such a case, U.S. military commanders should look more broadly for answers.

An assault on what would essentially be the population associated with a hybrid-postured group would not further U.S. interests. Instead, commanders should look for solutions that achieve long-term objectives and that can be explained in the global media as a primary, rather than secondary, consideration. Targeting outside sources of funding, training, and support may be more likely to bring down a group postured for hybrid war than a direct assault. Even, if the U.S. were willing to engage in a disproportionate response as a deterrent, there would be other, asymmetric ways to achieve that effect without an IDF style

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[62] General J. N. Mattis, Memorandum, 3.
[63] Richard M. Crowell, "Analyzing Hybrid Warfare," 9.

ground campaign. U.S. military commanders can gain insights into evolving methods of warfare by studying the recent IDF operations but should be wary of using them as a model for hybrid war.

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